The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news comments and collected information of matters affecting labor, organizing in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1008 — WILLIAM GREEN, President — WASHINGTON, D. C. TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1942 — GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer — VOL. 32, NO. 5

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Factories are going full blast all over the country, working two or three shifts, seven days a week. That's a pretty picture but you don't see it in the headlines. Those are reserved for strikes. The newspapers don't seem to be interested in constructive labor news.

All of which brings up the old question of freedom of the press and what it means. The AFL is for freedom of the press and always has been. We want to be able to believe what we read in the papers about the war and about everything else. But how can we when we see labor news so viciously distorted in the press?

For instance, the Vinson Committee put out a report smearing labor and charging unions have profited from the defense program. The story made page one in almost every newspaper in the country. Of course, not a word of it was true. President William Green promptly demonstrated from the records that the alleged wealth of unions was contained largely in insurance funds for which the organizations were obligated to their members. He pointed out that AFL Unions had paid out 450 million dollars in fourteen years to their members for unemployment, sickness, death and disability benefits. One would expect that, in all fairness, the newspapers would give equal space to this reply. They would have, if we had a free press in America. But, as it happened, only two newspapers gave adequate stories to Mr. Green's statement. The rest buried it away in a paragraph or two.

A Heart-to-Heart Talk

President Roosevelt has called in his new "labor cabinet" for a White House conference on war problems. They will take off their coats, let down their hair and have a real heart-to-heart talk—that is, if they do as the President suggests, and we're sure they will.

This conference will inaugurate one of the most significant developments of the war from labor's point of view. For the first time, the heads of the American Federation of Labor and the CIO are going to be consulted directly about Government policies before they are put into effect. For the first time, labor cooperation with the Government is being sought in the right way—by arranging prior consultation on the issues.

Well, we would expect that this important news would be clearly presented in the newspapers. But what do we find? A lot of misguided and silly stories calling the "labor cabinet" a "labor peace" board.

The American Federation of Labor has repeatedly stated that this board has nothing to do with labor peace. It has made it clear that disputes between the AFL and the CIO will not be considered by the board in consultation with the President.

Yet the misleading stories continue to be published and one begins to wonder whether this misinformation is accidental or deliberate. We find editorial writers deploring the possibility of a deadlock between the AFL and the CIO over some union dispute which the President, himself, might be called upon to settle in the role of umpire.

Such speculations are completely ridiculous. The AFL has more sense than to burden the President, who is the busiest man in the land, with labor's internal quarrels. The only matters which the AFL wants to consult the President about are important, major problems affecting labor as a whole in the war effort.

Hate and Fear

But perhaps the most amusing things we have read in the press in the last few weeks were the pious fears expressed by the outright labor haters about labor peace.

You remember, there seemed to be for a few days a prospect of the resumption of peace conferences between the AFL and the CIO—that is, with the CIO dominated door. Never have we seen the enemies of labor so amazed. The Scripps-Howard papers, the Philadelphia Inquirer, other staid journals of big-money opinion and the Dies-Dunn-Dock extremists like Pegler and Lawrence, all joined in a wailing chorus of warnings. The refrain ran something like this—"no group of labor leaders should be entrusted with power over ten million workers because that would constitute a danger to the country."

These are the people, we should remember, who have continually baited labor for being divided into two warring camps. These are the people who have constantly condemned labor for allegedly hurting business by jurisdictional battles. And now these very same people fall all over themselves in fright the moment it looks as though labor organizations become at all unified.

The reason for these apparently contradictory attitudes is not far to seek. These spokesmen for an allegedly free press owe their loyalty to the Messrs. Monopoly who control their publications. They speak the policy of big business. They hate and fear labor. They seize upon every opportunity to smear labor.

In non-publications, the press is free for the representatives of big business. If labor tries to get its say in, the press is no longer free.

A Billion Dollars For America!

THE GOAL—One billion dollars.

THE TIME—In the coming year.

THE SOURCE—Five Million AFL members.

THE PURPOSE—Victory in the war.

This brief outline summarizes the new AFL drive to help America win the war by "investing in victory," but it doesn't tell half the story.

The rest of the story is up to you—each and every one of you—the members of the American Federation of Labor.

We are all in this war, not just the soldiers and sailors on the front lines.

We've got to win this war to save our lives, our homes, our freedom, our right to call our soul our own.

It we can't do any actual fighting in this cause, at least we can make our spare dollars fight for us.

We can invest in Victory. We can invest in victory.

We can and must do this by buying defense bonds and defense savings stamps each and every week to the limit of our ability.

Uncle Sam is asking every one of us for a loan. He needs the money to help protect us. The job is going to cost 56 billions of dollars for the coming year alone. He can't raise this much by taxes. So he comes to us and asks us for a loan.

We are going to lend Uncle Sam down?

We love the old gent. We know he is in there pitching all the time for our good. So let's listen to his story.

He says our money is safe with him. We know that. He says it is a sin to let our savings lie idle. We must agree with him there, too. He says that for each $18.75 we lend him now by purchasing defense bonds, he will return $25 in ten years. We have his word for that and his bond and we know that Uncle Sam has never gone back on his word or his bond.

So what are we waiting for?

Let's go!

The drive will be opened on Washington's Birthday, Sunday, Feb. 22 with a joint radio broadcast to the entire nation by President William Green and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr.

On that night and during the following week, to be known as "Labor Invests in Victory Week," mass meetings will be held by all A.F. of L. Central Labor Unions in 500 American cities. All national, international and local unions are going to cooperate. The entire organization of the AFL joins Uncle Sam in his appeal. We know that every AFL worker will heed their call.

Let's go over the top with our billion dollar quota!

COTTON, RAYON, SILK UNIT ASKS 40-CENT MINIMUM PAY

Washington, D. C.—The Industry Committee for the cotton, rayon and silk branches of the textile industry, convened by Thomas Holland, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, U. S. Department of Labor, recommended that the increase in the minimum wage in the industry from the present minimum of 37½ cents per hour to 40 cents per hour.

President Francis J. Gorman and Secretary Anthony Valente of the United Textile Workers of America served as labor members of the committee representing the American Federation of Labor. Evidence was submitted by the A. F. of L. on behalf of all the affiliated unions in the industry in support of the 40-cent minimum, which is the highest minimum which can be recommended under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Green Blasts Fake Vinson Charges That Unions Profit From Defense

Declarés AFL Organizations Have Paid $450,000,000 in Insurance Benefits To Union Members

Washington, D. C.—President William Green of the American Federation of Labor sent to all members of Congress a thorough, factual refutation of and point by point by point by the Vinson Committee's report which charged trade unions had profited from the national defense program.

Mr. Green punctured the accusations made in the report by citing the following facts which he said were available to the committee but deliberately ignored by it:

1—That the $10,879,000 increase in the assets of 117 unions with a membership of 6,085,900 workers over the 15-month period ending Dec. 31, 1939, to March 31, 1941, as reported by the Vinson Committee, represents only 77 cents per member per month. (The figure is 12.6 cents per member per month for the AFL membership.)

2—That the great bulk of union assets are funds held in reserve for union members and paid out to them from time to time under various benefit systems, including unemployment insurance, death, disability, health, retirement and other benefits.

3—That in the 14-year period from 1927 to 1940, which covered two years of depression and recovery, AFL unions paid out, as benefits, a total of $450,000,000 in unemployment, sickness, disability, old age and death benefits, thus relieving the nation and its communities of a heavy relief burden.

4—That union funds are not used for profit-making or to engage in any business enterprise but belong to the union members and are collected and expended at their direction and in their behalf.

5—That recent increases in union assets can be accounted for as follows:

(a) Increases in union membership (by AFL) gained 60,000 members during the period covered by the Vinson Committee.)

(b) Because of widespread re-employment, union members previously jobless were able to renew dues payments and start to build up reserves in order to re-establish eligibility for benefits.

(c) Because of the no-strike policy of the American Federation of Labor and its affiliated unions there was a sharp decrease in the number of strikes and in the length of their duration, thus enabling nothing down disbursements for strike benefits.

Mr. Green declared that far from seeking to profit from the defense program AFL building trades and metal trades unions have endeavored to help the Government in every way possible and have transported at their own expense hundreds of thousands of mechanics and skilled workers from their home communities to the site of defense projects where their services were urgently needed.

Mr. Green said:

"The committee's conclusion that the American trade unions have sought to benefit from the defense program to the detriment of the public interest is utterly without foundation or substantiation. It constitutes a slur on the record of the American trade union movement. The committee's failure to examine and report on organized labor's contribution to defense and the cost of such organization sustained by trade unions is conclusive proof of the committee's anti-labor bias."

Teamsters Vote $8,000,000 Loan To Government Without Interest

Miami, Fla.—The Executive Board of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, meeting here, authorized President Daniel J. Tobin to turn over $8,000,000 of the union's funds to the United States Government as a loan without interest.

Mr. Tobin expressed the hope that this trail-blazing move might start a tremendous flow of interest-free funds into the Federal Treasury from many unions.

"The problem that overbalances all others now," he said, "is that our country is at war and in danger. The Government must raise huge sums to help prosecute the war effort. Personally, the Union wants to help the Government to the limit of its capacities and it does not want to charge the Government for this service.

"We would like to see other large accumulations of cash made available to the Government, interest free. I believe our union has shown the way.

"This country soon will be burdened with an interest load of a billion dollars a year. Those with money lying idle should offer it to help hold down the debt charges. Idle money helps no one and if we lose the war we lose all."

Mr. Tobin said he was leaving for Washington immediately to confer with Treasury officials on how the union funds can be transferred as a loan to the Government.

Unions In Nation's Capital Start $100,000 Civilian Defense Fund

Washington, D. C.—The AFL Central Union of the nation's capital has launched a drive to raise a $100,000 contribution for local civilian defense activities by union members.

Under the leadership of President John Locher and Secretary Frank Coleman, thousands of AFL workers have joined in a movement to contribute a day's pay for this cause.

The drive, which is being carried out in collaboration with Government and civilian defense officials, was described in a special statement issued by President William Green of the American Federation of Labor as the chief of the nation.

After describing the varied and constructive efforts of the AFL to help the nation in the war and defense service on the job and the home front, Mr. Green said:

"We do not have to go far afield to find outstanding instances of labor's loyalty. Right here in the nation's capital the men and women of the American Federation of Labor are rallying behind the civilian defense program in a heart-warming way.

"Under the patriotic leadership of John Locher and Frank Coleman, the Central Labor Union of Washington, D. C. has launched a drive to raise a $100,000 contribution for civilian defense here. This money is being raised by a process which demonstrates more eloquently than words the loyal and devoted spirit of our union members. Each of them has volunteered to turn over a day's pay for this necessary cause. Already the money is pouring in and I have no doubt that the huge quota will be exceeded before the drive is over.

"These working men and women are not limiting their contribution to money alone. They are volunteering to utilize their free time and their skill to protect this beautiful city which all America admires from devastating enemy attacks.

"We hope and pray that the occasion may never arise for putting these men and women to work at jobs like repairing damaged streets, restoring wrecked communications, removing wreckage of buildings and other tragic assignments. We hope and pray that not a single American city will ever have to suffer the horror of an air raid. But we are at war against ruthless foes and we must be prepared for the worst. They have challenged us to fight to the death struggle. It is an inspiration to me —and I know it will be to all American citizens—to see how gloriously the workers of America are responding to that challenge."

COMPANY MUST BARGAIN WITH THREE AFL UNIONS

Washington, D. C.—The National Labor Relations Board announced an order directing the United Biscuit Company of America, Buffalo, N. Y., to cease and desist from bargaining collectively with three American Federation of Labor unions as sole bargaining agents for their employees in the respective units.

The Board directed the company to offer immediate reinstatement with back pay to 165 employees, 150 of whom went out on strike at various times during September and October, 1940, in protest against the company's alleged unfair practices in refusing to bargain with the unions, thus causing and prolonging the strike. The remaining 15 were laborers who were discharged because of their union membership.

The unions which the Board directed the company to bargain with are: Auto Mechanics Local 1093, International Association of Machinists; Bakery, Tea, Coffee, Yeast & Pretzel Drivers Local No. 264; and Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International Union of America, Local 431.

News Briefs

TOBACCO WORKERS TEST EMPLOYERS' PATRIOTISM

Richmond, Va.—Tobacco corporations now face a real test of their patriotism toward the men in the armed forces.

The A. F. of L. Tobacco Workers' Union have offered to give 20,000 hours of free labor a week—or over 1,000,000 a year—if manufacturers showed equal generosity by donating the raw materials. That would provide soldiers and cigarettes, cigars or other tobacco products for every soldier, sailor or marine in the U. S. forces, the union said.

"It's up to the employers now to match the patriotism of the workers," declared I. M. Ornburn, secretary-treasurer of the A. F. of L. Union Label Trades Department.

ADOLPH WERNER IS DEAD; RAILWAY CARMEN OFFICER

Kansas City, Mo.—News of the death of Adolph Werner, veteran member and for many years vice president of the Brotherhood Railway Carmen was received at Brotherhood headquarters here.

Werner, who, in 1935, had been retired on a pension because of disability, died at his home in Niles, Mich., Jan. 26.

LABOR'S DEFENSE WORK LAUDED BY MORGENTHAU

Detroit, Mich.—Labor has not only done its share in furthering the defense program, but it has been ahead of the procession, according to Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr.

In a speech here, the Treasury chieftain sought to put at rest a flood of calumny and slander let loose by labor-haters, in and out of Congress.

"American labor," he said, "has been far ahead of me in its willingness to produce armaments to win the war, whatever the sacrifices, whatever the consequences."

LUBIN IS REAPPOINTED LABOR STATISTICS CHIEF

Washington, D. C.—Isador Lubin, one of Washington's able economists, who has been Commissioner of Labor Statistics for eight years, was appointed for another four-year term by President Roosevelt. His appointment went to the Senate for confirmation. In recent months, Lubin has been on leave from his Department of Labor position to serve as top statistician for the defense program.

4,698 UNFAIR LABOR CASES CLOSED BY NLRB LAST YEAR

Washington, D. C.—The annual report of the National Labor Relations Board states that during fiscal 1941 it closed 4,698 unfair labor practice cases involving more than 1,200,000 workers.

The report also set forth that 502 company unions were disestablished and collective bargaining begun in 1,009 cases; 23,475 workers were reinstated with formerly discriminatory discharges"; 5,181 discharged workers received $924,76) in back pay, and 24,457 workers who had struck in cases of alleged unfair labor practice were reinstated.

TRUCK DRIVERS AGREEMENT BOOSTS WAGES OF 50,000

Chicago, Ill.—After four months of negotiation a new contract was signed here between about 800 trucking companies and 50,000 drivers represented by the Central States Drivers Council, representing more than 80,000 drivers, affiliated with the AFL International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America, have been seeking an agreement on working rules.

Under the new contract drivers receive pay increases of 10 cents an hour and 90 cents an hour and 6 cents a mile.

DELIVERIES OF MILK NOT CURTAILED BY WPB

Washington, D. C.—Assurances that no curtailment has been ordered by the War Production Board in the daily delivery of milk and other dairy products have been given in representatives of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers, AFL affiliate, Sidney Hillman, head director of War Production Board.

A committee of delegates of milk truck drivers and other dairy workers' locals met with Clyde Beardsley, chief of the dairy section, food supply branch and representative of the labor division of WPB. Beardsley informed the delegates that not only is a curtailment order issued by WPB but that the labor division would be consulted before any action affecting workers in any way was taken, Hillman said.

Labor Wins Outstanding Victory As Price Control Law Is Adopted

WAR LABOR BOARD ENDS MANY LABOR DISPUTES

Washington, D. C.—A 100 per cent batting average in ending or averting strikes was scored by the new National War Labor Board as it rounded out the third week of its activities.

In three walkouts and one threatened stoppage, the board's appeals brought immediate results, and production continued pending hearings by the board on the issues in dispute.

Cases before the board rose to 64, with close to 200,000 workers involved, but not one man among these was out on a picket line.

No Wage Ceilings or Regulation In Measure Designed To Check Inflation

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor scored a major legislative victory when Congress passed and the President signed a price control bill free of any wage ceilings.

In signing the measure, President Roosevelt declared that when coupled with adequate taxation, rationing and a proper savings program it would go far toward checking inflation.

The life of every person in the land will be vitally affected by the new law.

It vests in a single administrator sweeping authority to prevent profiteering by fixing maximum prices for all commodities and controlling rents.

The President specifically indicated his intention of appointing Leon Henderson to this all-important job. Henderson has been functioning as price administrator under emergency powers.

It will be Henderson's major task to see to it that consumers who are required to do with less because of the shortages are not mercilessly gouged by profiteers.

He will also have to prevent price mark-ups on vital materials which the Government must purchase in huge quantities for war production.

Reactionary newspapers sought to make it appear that the new law is worthless because it makes no attempt to regulate wages, but the facts disprove these contentions.

The American Federation of Labor has repeatedly demonstrated that higher wages represent only a minor proportion of the increased costs of production and that increased productivity of workers more than makes up for such wage boosts as industry has been forced to yield.

From the beginning the American Federation of Labor took the lead in demanding enactment of a price control bill as a protection to the nation's wage earners against runaway prices. It was shown that each jump in the cost of living amounted to a pay cut for workers since their pay envelope dollar would buy less.

At the same time, the Federation bitterly fought all moves to place wages under Executive or Judicial regulation or control on these grounds:

1—The labor of human beings, as existing law recognizes, is not a commodity or article of commerce.

2—Wage increases do not materially affect production costs.

3—Pay envelopes still have a long way to go to catch up with increased living costs.

In signing the new law, the President made it clear that he is far from satisfied with provision regulating prices of farm products. The farm bloc, which was most vehemently for wage regulation, saw to it that premium prices for agricultural products were assured in the bill. Amendments may have to be adopted to guarantee farmers a fair return but to prevent steeper prices for the necessities of life.

FOR PLEASED WITH "LABOR CABINET"

First Meeting of AFL-CIO Group To Be Held With Him Feb. 5

Washington, D. C.—President Roosevelt indicated to the press that he is highly pleased with the making of his new Combined Labor War Board which will consult with him regularly on all matters concerning labor's participation in the nation's war effort.

The President announced he will hold his first meeting with the newly constituted "labor cabinet" on Feb. 5 at the White House.

The AFL members on this board, who will serve with three CIO representatives, are President William Green, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany, and Vice President Daniel J. Tobin.

The President said at a press conference that this was the kind of group whose members could take off their coats, let down their hair and sit down with him for heart-to-heart talks.

On such a board, the President said, you want the kind of people you can call by their first names and talk things over with frankly without having to watch each word or have a labor spokesman present.

He made it clear that he is satisfied the members of the board live up to these specifications.

Among the immediate problems likely to be discussed at the opening conference are allocation of labor, future labor supply, relief for those made jobless by conversion of industry for war production, priority regulations and steps to check inflation.

PHOTO ENGRAVERS BUY $25,000 DEFENSE BONDS

Philadelphia, Pa.—Local 7, International Photo Engravers Union of North America, voted to buy $25,000 in defense bonds.

Green's Plea Succeeds In Averting Strike By Detroit City Employes

Washington, D. C.—The first threatened strike by an AFL union since war was declared was called off immediately when President William Green appealed to the union officials to live up to the Federation's "no-strike" pledge to President Roosevelt.

The strike had been called by Detroit Local Union No. 77 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employes (AFL), but was voted down at a mass meeting after Mr. Green intervened.

Advised of the grave situation by Arnold M. Zander, general president of the national union, Mr. Green wired Emmett P. Freeman, the union's representative in Detroit:

"The American Federation of Labor cannot tolerate or endorse a strike among its members in private industry. Consequently it cannot under any circumstances endorse or approve a strike of city, state or municipal employes. The American Federation of Labor has entered into a solemn compact with the Government in which it pledged itself to forego the exercise of the right to strike and prevent industrial disputes in production. This agreement must be carried out at any cost. The threatened strike in Detroit should be prevented if not every effort. I therefore call upon the members of the State, County and Municipal Employes in Detroit to refrain from going on strike for the redress of grievances. I appeal to the good judgment and common sense of the municipal employes members of the American Federation of Labor in Detroit to stand by the solemn sacred agreement to refrain from striking which the American Federation of Labor has made with the President of the United States."

Mr. Green received the following response from Freeman the next day:

"Thank you for your telegram. Your appeal was a deciding factor in preventing a strike of the city employes of Detroit."

PATTERSON LAUDS LABOR FOR ALL-OUT WAR EFFORT

Washington, D. C.—Under-Secretary of War Patterson paid tribute to the "patriotic cooperation" which the War Department is receiving from all branches of labor working on war production contracts. Without this cooperation, our entire program would be a failure. With labor pouring out its utmost energy and initiative, we can move forward quickly and decisively towards our goal of victory production."

"Our program of victory is going to require unprecedented energy on the part of both our soldiers in the front lines and our soldiers of production."

HONOLULU BUS OPERATORS AIDED JAP RAID VICTIMS

Chicago, Ill.—The important work performed by the 850 members of Division 1178, Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employes of America, in the Honolulu, Hawaii district against the surprise attack of the Japanese is described by James B. McGrew, spokesman of the Honolulu division, in the Union Leader, Chicago official journal of the Amalgamated Association. Mr. McGrew says:

"Our first assignment was to aid in evacuating persons from the stricken areas after the Jap bombers dropped their deadly missiles on the island. Unmindful of their own perils, our drivers heroically piloted bus load after bus load of civilians to safer areas. Other drivers volunteered for emergency work operating army trucks, thus relieving many soldiers for active combat duty in repelling the invaders."